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Normandy to Victory: The War Diary of General Courtney H. Hodges and the First U.S. Army (Allison Webster)

William C. Sylvan, Francis G. Smith Jr.

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During World War II, U.S. Army generals often maintained diaries of their activities and the day-to-day operations of their command. These diaries have proven to be invaluable historical resources for World War II scholars and enthusiasts alike. Until now, one of the most historically significant of these diaries, the one kept for General Courtney H. Hodges of the First U.S. Army, has not been widely available to the public. Maintained by two of Hodges's aides, Major William C. Sylvan and Captain Francis G. Smith Jr., this unique military journal offers a vivid, firsthand account detailing the actions, decisions, and daily activities of General Hodges and the First Army throughout the war.

The diary opens on June 2, 1944, as Hodges and the First Army prepare for the Allied invasion of France. In the weeks and months that follow, the diary highlights the crucial role that Hodges's often undervalued command?the first to cross the German border, the first to cross the Rhine, the first to close to the Elbe?played in the Allied operations in northwest Europe. The diary recounts the First Army's involvement in the fight for France, the Siegfried Line campaign, the Battle of the Bulge, the drive to the Roer River, and the crossing of the Rhine, following Hodges and his men through savage European combat until the German surrender in May 1945.

Popularly referred to as the "Sylvan Diary," after its primary writer, the diary has previously been available only to military historians and researchers, who were permitted to use it at only the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, the U.S. Army Center for Military History, or the U.S. Army Military History Institute. Retired U.S. Army historian John T. Greenwood has now edited this text in its entirety and added a biography of General Hodges as well as extensive notes that clarify the diary's historical details. *Normandy to Victory* provides military history enthusiasts with valuable insights into the thoughts and actions of a leading American commander whose army played a crucial role in the Allied successes of World War II.

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